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SD Heritage Fund to undergo name change

PIERRE, S.D. – Officials are hoping that changing the name of the nonprofit financial partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society will make it clearer to donors what their contributions are being used for.

The South Dakota Heritage Fund was established in 1982 to provide financial and human resources for the State Historical Society. It does this by seeking capital, annual and planned gifts to support the mission, goals and programs of the State Historical Society, headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The Heritage Fund is a nonprofit corporation, governed by a citizen board of directors, which recently approved the name change. The Heritage Fund office is also located in the Cultural Heritage Center.

As of Jan. 1, 2012, the Heritage Fund will be known as The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation. The Heritage Fund website will change from www.sdheritagefund.org to www.sdhsf.org.

“The South Dakota Heritage Fund exists to support the work of the South Dakota State Historical Society, and by changing their name to more closely relate the two organizations, we believe it will improve the public understanding of our relationship,” said Jay D. Vogt, State Historical Society director.

Patricia Miller, president of the Heritage Fund, agreed, saying, “The new name will make it clearer to people that their donations are going to an entity that perpetually supports an institution, in this case, the South Dakota State Historical Society.”

Bill Peterson, chairman of the Heritage Fund board of directors, said the name change should have immediate benefits.

“One,” he said, “the society’s members, our donors and the public will have a better understanding of the purposes of the two organizations; and two, the society’s foundation can more effectively solicit contributions for the society as their non-profit partner.”

Vogt said that the Heritage Fund provides much-needed financial support to the State Historical Society.

“The State Historical Society is a state agency, part of the Department of Tourism, and receives tax dollars for a portion of our budget,” he said. “We rely on those funds and earned revenue, such as fees, museum admissions, and membership dues, to support our day-to-day operations, and we count on the Heritage Fund, soon to be the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, to continue to promote the Society and seek funds for special projects.”

Donations to the Heritage Fund made possible “The South Dakota Experience,” the award-winning, three-phase permanent exhibit in the Cultural Heritage Center. Since the completion of that exhibit in 2005, donations to the Heritage Fund have gone to such State Historical Society projects as the archives photo digitization, museum traveling suitcase exhibits and books published by the South Dakota State Historical Society Press.

“We’re excited about our new identity and hope that it will make us more identifiable as a charitable foundation,” Miller said.

For more information on supporting the work of the State Historical Society, contact the Heritage Fund at (605) 773-6001 or the society at (605) 773-3458.

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The South Dakota Heritage Fund is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota’s history and heritage for future generations.

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society’s world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.